

Message Text

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EXDIS

NOFORN

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MARR, TU, CY, GR, US

SUBJECT: GREEK FOREIGN OFFICE VIEWS ON CYPRUS AND NATO

1. DCM HAD INFORMAL MEETINGS YESTERDAY AFTERNOON AND TODAY WITH FONOFF UNDERSECRETARY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, DIMITRIOS BITSIOS (NO. 2 IN HIERARCHY), AND JEAN TZOUNIS, DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF POLITICAL AFFAIRS (NO. 4 IN HIERARCHY). BOTH EXPRESSED DEEPEST MISGIVINGS ABOUT CURRENT DETERIORATION OF GREEK-AMERICAN RELATIONS AND DIM PROSPECTS FOR PROGRESS ON CYPRUS PROBLEM. BOTH EMPHASIZED NEED FOR CONSIDERABLE FINESSE IN OUR DEALINGS WITH GREEK GOVERNMENT AT PRESENT TIME. THEY RECOGNIZED DIFFICULTY WE FACED IN MOVING TURKS TOWARD MORE FLEXIBLE POSITION, BUT BELIEVED THAT OUR HANDLING OF CYPRUS ISSUE TO DATE HAD AGGRAVATED GREEK-AMERICAN RELATIONS BY SHOWING TOO LITTLE UNDERSTANDING OF GREEK PSYCHOLOGY AND THE POLITICAL TOLERANCES WITHIN WHICH CARAMANLIS WAS FORCED TO OPERATE AT THIS TIME.

2. BITSIOS REMARKED THAT OUR BEST APPROACH TO CARAMANLIS WOULD BE TO GIVE THE IMPRESSION OF TAKING HIM INTO OUR CONFIDENCE.

"YOU SHOULD NOT", SAID BITSIOS, "CALL ON HIM TO DELIVER PRESS

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RELEASES." THERE WERE TWO THINGS FOR AMERICANS TO KEEP IN MIND

ABOUT CARAMANLIS. THE FIRST WAS THAT HE WANTED TO AVOID INFLECTING IRREPARABLE DAMAGE TO GREECE'S RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES AND WITH WESTERN EUROPE. THE SECOND WAS THAT HE HAD TO CONTEND WITH A "REAL BUT IRRATIONAL" SENSE OF NATIONAL FRUSTRATION WHICH SOUGHT TO EXPLAIN AWAY THE FAILURES OF GREECE'S EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL POLICIES BY BLAMING THEM ON GREECE'S TRADITIONAL ALLIES. THIS WAS A CLIMATE OF OPINION WHICH THE LEFT COULD EXPLOIT MORE EASILY THAN CARAMANLIS. THE PRIME MINISTER, IN KISSIAKIS VIEW, WAS TRYING TO KEEP THE ISSUE OUT OF THE HANDS OF THE LEFT BUT WOULD NEED MORE HELP FROM US IF HE WAS TO SUCCEED. IN THIS CONNECTION KISSIAKIS COMPLAINED ABOUT THE "REPRIMAND" IN THE SECRETARY'S PUBLIC REFERENCE TO ANTI-AMERICAN DEMONSTRATIONS AND THREATS TO LEAVE NATO.

3. DCM TOLD KISSIAKIS THAT THE GREEKS SHOULD NOT BE TOO SENSITIVE; WE WERE TRYING TO BE HELPFUL DIPLOMATICALLY IN ANKARA AND ACTIONS WERE MORE IMPORTANT THAN WORDS. FURTHERMORE IT WAS IMPORTANT TO BEAR IN MIND THAT THE UNITED STATES HAS GLOBAL RESPONSIBILITIES, INCLUDING MUTUAL SECURITY TREATIES WITH A LARGE NUMBER OF COUNTRIES. WE HAD TO MAKE CLEAR THAT THESE ALLIANCES WERE IN FACT BASED ON MUTUAL INTERESTS AND THAT THE ABILITY OF THE UNITED STATES TO FULFILL ITS OBLIGATIONS UNDER THEM WOULD BE PARALYZED BY THE DISAFFECTION OF INDIVIDUAL ALLIES. IN DCM'S OPINION THE STATEMENT TO WHICH KISSIAKIS TOOK EXCEPTION WAS A CLEAR INDICATION OF OUR DESIRE TO BE HELPFUL IN THE GREEK-TURKISH DISPUTE, NOT THE REVERSE.

4. KISSIAKIS SAID NEVERTHELESS GREEKS FELT ABUSED AND IMPOTENT. THEY NEEDED MORE SYMPATHY THAN THEY THOUGHT THEY WERE GETTING. WE WERE NOT DEALING WITH PIECES ON THE CHESS BOARD AND WE SHOULD NOT IGNORE THE PSYCHOLOGICAL DIMENSION WHICH WAS SO IMPORTANT IN GREEK AFFAIRS.

5. DCM SAID THAT WE ALSO NEEDED HELP FROM THE GREEKS. THE CYPRUS PROBLEM HAD BEEN FESTERING FOR A LONG TIME. THERE WERE NO EASY SOLUTIONS. THE GREEK GOVERNMENT COULD BE SURE THAT AT THE PRESENT MOMENT THERE WAS NO MORE IMPORTANT PROBLEM ON OUR AGENDA THAN CYPRUS AND THE ISSUES FLOWING FROM IT. HE ASKED KISSIAKIS TO CONSIDER WAYS IN WHICH WE COULD REDUCE THE PRESENT TENSION AND BEGIN MOVING TOWARD A SOLUTION. IF THE

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GREEK GOVERNMENT HAD SERIOUS SUGGESTIONS TO MAKE THIS WAS THE TIME TO MAKE THEM. THE HIGHEST LEVELS OF THE U.S. GOVERNMENT WERE KEENLY INTERESTED IN GREEK VIEWS AND WISHED TO DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO REPAIR THE DAMAGE DONE TO GREEK-U.S. RELATIONS. THE PRESENT STATE OF AFFAIRS WAS NOT IN THE LONG-TERM INTERESTS OF GREECE, THE UNITED STATES OR OF THE WESTERN ALLIANCE. THE EMBASSY WOULD FAITHFULLY REPORT TO WASHINGTON WHATEVER PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS THE GREEK GOVERNMENT

WOULD CARE TO MAKE. HE HOPED THAT BITSIOS WHO HAD WORKED ON THE CYPRUS PROBLEM FOR SO LONG AND HAD SEEN IT PASS THROUGH SO MANY DIFFERENT PHASES WITHOUT BEING RESOLVED WOULD GIVE US THE BENEFIT OF HIS EXPERIENCE IN THE FROM OF CONSTRUCTIVE SUGGESTIONS.

6. TZOUNIS COVERED MUCH OF THE SAME GROUND IN A SEPARATE CONVERSATION BUT HIS COMMENTS WERE MORE POINTED ON WHAT WE CAN EXPECT IN THE WAY OF SPECIFIC GREEK DEMARCHES AFFECTING AMERICAN MILITARY FACILITIES IN GREECE. LIKE BITSIOS HE SAID THAT CARAMANLIS WANTED TO RESTRUCTURE OUR COOPERATION BUT NOT DISMATE IT. THE GREEK GOVERNMENT RECOGNIZED THAT MILITARY COOPERATION WITH THE UNITED STATES WAS IN ITS OWN INTERESTS. SPECIFIC AGREEMENTS TO IMPLEMENT OUR COOPERATION HOWEVER WERE IN MANY RESPECTS ANACHRONISTIC IN GREEK EYES. TZOUNIS THOUGHT THAT THE STATUS OF FORCES AGREEMENT WAS A CASE IN POINT. HE SAID THAT IN COMING WEEKS AND MONTHS THE GREEK GOVERNMENT WOULD BE ASKING US TO RENEGOTIATE THE MODALITIES OF MANY OF OUR AGREEMENTS WITH GREECE. "YOU WILL BE SPENDING A LOT OF TIME IN THE FOREIGN OFFICE," HE SAID. HE ASKED US TO BEAR IN MIND THAT AS FAR AS THE GREEK LEADERSHIP WAS CONCERNED THERE WAS NO DESIRE TO ABANDON GREECE'S PLACE IN THE WESTERN CAMP OR FOR THE UNITED STATES TO RELINQUISH ITS ROLE AS GREECE'S CLOSEST FRIEND. THE STYLE OF OUR RELATIONSHIP COULD HOPEFULLY BE CHANGED WITHOUT AFFECTING THE SUBSTANCE OF ITS.

7. COMMENT: THESE TWO SENIOR FOREIGN OFFICE OFFICIALS ARE SOLID CITIZENS AND ALTHOUGH NETIHER IS ABOVE MAKING OUR FLESH CREEP IF THIS WILL ENCOURAGE US TO PUT MORE PRESSURE ON THE TURKS, THE ESSENCE OF WHAT THEY SAID COMES AS CLOSE TO GREEK "REALITY" AS WE ARE LIKELY TO GET. IN THE ABSENCE OF SOME TOTALLY UNEXPECTED AND MOST UNCHARACTERISTIC SHOW OF FLEXIBILITY BY THE TURKS THE BEST WAY TO CUT OUR LOSSES IN GREECE IS TO PRAISE THEM PUBLICLY WHENEVER WE CAN AND HOLD THEIR HANDS THE REST OF THE
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TIME. AS FAR AS OUR BILATERAL MILITARY COOPERATION IS CONCERNED WE ARE STUDYING THE PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS THAT MODIFICATION OF OUR OPERATING PROCEDURES WOULD ENTAIL AND WILL BE REPORTING OUR VIEWS AND RECOMMENDATIONS SUBSEQUENTLY.
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